

PROPOSED ADOPTION OF A "DECLARATION" CLARIFYING  
CERTAIN PROBLEMS ARISING IN CONNECTION WITH NAMES  
PUBLISHED IN WORKS WRITTEN IN LATIN

By FRANCIS HEMMING, C.M.G., C.B.E.

(Secretary to the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature)

(Commission Reference : Z.N.(S.) 1223)

The purpose of the present application is to ask the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature to adopt a *Declaration* clarifying certain problems arising in connection with names published in works written in Latin. The problem here in question arises from the fact that, whereas in the case of works written in any language other than Latin, the requirement that zoological names shall consist of Latin or Latinised words or words treated as such makes it possible in almost every case readily to identify as zoological names Latin words occurring in the work concerned. This, however, is not always so easy in the case of works written in Latin.

2. Generic names published in works written in Latin are fairly numerous in the older literature and such names have always been accepted, many now being in common use. Generic names so published are generally recognisable without much difficulty owing to the fact that in accordance with the provisions of Article 8 of the *Règles* they are usually printed with an initial capital letter. Moreover, in an ordinary Latin sentence a noun occurring otherwise than as the first word of that sentence is not printed in this way and accordingly the use of a capital initial letter in such cases provides a useful indication that the word in question was being used as a generic name. In most cases also a clear indication is provided by the fact that, except on the hypothesis that the word in question was being employed as a generic name, it would be impossible to translate the sentence from the Latin in a way that would make sense. The acceptance of a word as a generic name when published in a work written in Latin is dependent upon its being published in the nominative singular, as has been made clear by the Commission by the Ruling given in *Opinion* 183, the substance of which was written into the *Règles* by the Thirteenth International Congress of Zoology, Paris, 1948 (1950, *Bull. zool. Nomencl.* 4 : 139—140). The position as regards specific names published in works written in Latin is broadly similar to that of generic names, except that in their case (except in the case of proper nouns in some early works) they are not printed with capital initial letters. On the other hand, identification as specific names in such cases is commonly assisted by the fact that a new specific name

normally makes its appearance in immediate juxtaposition with a specific name.

3. A similar problem arises in connection with subspecific names when published in works written in Latin. In the case of such names when consisting of noun substantives the indication that the word was intended by its original author to be a zoological name differs in no respects from those discussed above in connection with specific names. The position is, however, not always so clear when instead of a noun an adjective is employed. Even in these cases there is, however, often no ground for doubt. As a comparatively recent example we may cite the *Catalog der Lepidopteren des Palaearctischen Faunengebietes* by Otto Staudinger and Hans Rebel published in 1901, the whole of the descriptive indications in which are written in Latin and which abounds with new "varietal" (i.e. subspecific) names. The following are examples taken at random from the above work: *Erebia afer* var. *hyrcana* (: 51); *Cigaritis acamas* var. *transcaspica* (: 76); *Agrotis trux* var. *amasina* (: 152). In these cases it is perfectly obvious that the Latin adjectives concerned were published as subspecific names, this being demonstrated both by the schematic lay-out adopted in the *Catalog* and by the fact that after each name the author (Staudinger) added an abbreviated version of his name ("Stgr.").

4. There are cases, however, where the reader is not assisted either by the insertion of the author's name or by the use of so rigid a lay-out. Numerous examples of this kind may be found for example, in the Gmelin (13th) Edition of the *Systema Naturae* of Linnaeus. We may cite here, as an example, a case in the Class Aves which has already been dealt with (though in other respects imperfectly) by the Commission in one of its older *Opinions* (*Opinion* 67) when it placed the generic name *Trichoglossus* Stephens, 1826, on the *Official List*. In this case the Commission cited as a subjective synonym of the name of the type species the name *Psittacus novae Hollandiae* [sic] Gmelin (1788, in Linnaeus, *Syst. Nat.* (ed. 13) 1(1) : 316). Reference to Gmelin's work shows that this name (in the defective spelling *novae Hollandia*) was introduced as the name of a "varietas" of what he called *Psittacus haematotus* and that at the same time he introduced another name, *moluccanus*, for what he regarded as another "varietas" of the above nominal species. The taxon concerned was for long known by the name *novae hollandiae* (correction of *novae Hollandia*) Gmelin, 1788, and the only reason why it is not now so known is that it has been found that by a First Reviser selection made by Jardine & Selby ([1831]) it is necessary to give precedence to the other name (*moluccanus*) published by Gmelin (as shown above) on the same occasion in the same work.

5. There is no doubt that the general practice of zoologists has been to accept as validly published names words employed as such works written in

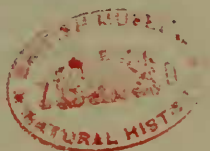
Latin, though here and there in the literature a few such names will be found which have been either overlooked or rejected for one reason or another. Such cases represent, however, at most no more than a very small minority. It would certainly cause a most serious disturbance in current nomenclatorial practice if names published in the foregoing manner were now to be rejected. It seems desirable that the situation should be clarified by the adoption by the Commission of a *Declaration* making it clear that names of the kind discussed above are to be accepted as satisfying the requirements of the *Règles*.

6. In this as in other similar cases it seems desirable that the proposed *Declaration* should be so drafted as to have a strictly objective nomenclatorial basis, thus avoiding the difficulties which are always liable to arise in provisions involving subjective judgment. It is accordingly suggested that the proposed *Declaration* should be on the following lines :—

#### Draft of suggested “ Declaration ”

Where in any work written in the Latin language :—

- (1) a noun (or a word treated as a noun) is employed as a generic name, it is to be accepted as having been validly published as such, provided that it was published in the nominative singular ;
- (2) a noun or adjective is associated binominally with a word accepted under (1) above as having been employed as a generic name, the noun or adjective concerned is to be accepted as having been validly published as a specific name ;
- (3) a noun or adjective is associated trinominally (either directly by or by being linked to a binomen by an expression such as “ ssp. ”, “ var. ”, etc.) with a word accepted under (2) above as having been employed as a specific name, the noun or adjective concerned is to be treated as having been published as a subspecific name.



**PURCHASED**  
**2 JUL 1957**